

BEAM US UP, SCOTTIE

Paul Fischer: Had you ever imagined in what direction your career would have taken had *Star Trek* not come along?

James Doohan: There's no use in imagining that, because that didn't happen. But in the very same week that I signed the contract for *Star Trek*, they wanted me to sign a contract for *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*, to play an engineer with no accent. Now what would have happened if that series had gone on for a year and a half or whatever, who knows, since I was just beginning to find a lot of work in Hollywood.

P.F: What were your impressions of the first TV script when you initially read it?

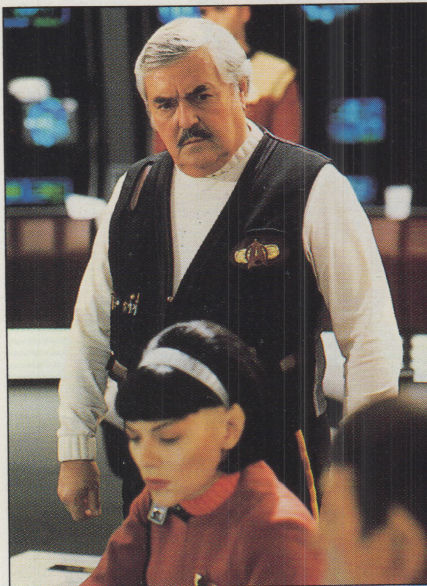
J.D: I didn't have much to do in it, but I liked it, which doesn't necessarily give it great credence. But to me, after we started shooting, all the scripts that we'd get were just terrific. They made me wonder why we even bothered with a pilot like the one we did, which I didn't think was nearly as good as the other shows following it. We used to sit around the table and read the scripts and somebody would say: 'Wait till you read this one.'

P.F: Is there a particular script from the TV show that still stands out in your mind?

J.D: My favourite is Doomsday Machine and I think *City On The Edge of Forever* is great.

P.F: Were you instrumental in developing the character of Scottie, or was it all in the writing?

J.D: In developing a character like that, it's easy when that character is you, plus 1% accent, because there's no



What is being touted as the final *Star Trek* film in the current series, *Star Trek VI*, beams onto cinema screens next month, some 25 years after the original TV series on which it is based went to air. Canadian actor James Doohan, otherwise known as Scottie, that loveable Scottish engineer, has been with *Star Trek* from its conception. The actor was recently in Australia and he talked to Paul Fischer.



creation going on there compared to creating a role on the stage. In the theatre, you have three weeks or longer to work on a character, and I missed the fun of that.

P.F: How difficult was it to retain the freshness of Scottie throughout all the TV episodes?

J.D: Well, any good actor knows how to do that; you just do it. You have to do each one as if it's the first time.

P.F: Was the series ahead of its time?

J.D: To me, it was very valuable to us at the time, because I really think it did its part in getting people to care for space in the future. A lot of people looked to it as giving hope for the future, and each of the episodes were like little morality plays.

P.F: Was its renewed popularity due to the reality of the space age that emerged in the late sixties?

J.D: *Star Trek* was an entity to itself, and I don't think it was renewed by the space programme; I think *Star Trek* even helped the programme.

P.F: So why did the series attain this phenomenal cult-like success after its demise?

J.D: I just think it was seen at a proper time; the original 8.30 time was probably a bit too late.

P.F: How did you react to the prospect of going back to it all for the 1979 film?

J.D: A little bit of relief that Paramount had finally seen the light, not to mention the fact that I was going to make a living out of it, for six months anyway.

Continued on page 11

MORE THAN A DREAM

Continued from page 7

Petty was born in Tennessee and raised on a farm in Iowa, just about as far away from the dream factory as you can get. Her decision to act was based on one simple desire: "I wasn't really happy in my life. When you're young and you have to decide what to do when you grow up, they give you all these aptitude tests, and if you don't like everything else, then you become an actress," she says laughingly. "From the time I was little my love was performing, acting, singing, jumping around and generally making a spectacle of myself." Despite the intense competition to succeed, Lori never had any doubt that she

would make it. "If you go in there with the attitude: 'I need something to fall back on or I ought to have another skill', then you're really not giving 100% and you genuinely don't believe in yourself enough. I think you've really got to believe it's going to happen, because if you don't, then maybe you ought to be doing something else."

Ask her if she found it tough breaking in to showbusiness, and Petty will tell you that she feels like she's still breaking in. "Having done a bunch of TV shows and now three movies, I feel that I'm on a progressive track. I'll just take one step at a time. It's been no overnight success thing for me, instead it's been five years of going from one small job to the next. I still feel that I'm looking for good

people and projects."

Following appearances on several TV shows, Petty made her film debut with a small role in *Broadcast News*. That was followed by a part in *Cadillac Man*, but it was her next film that put her in the big league. The movie was *Point Break*, an action thriller co-starring Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves, in which she plays a headstrong surfer called Tyler who teaches FBI undercover agent Reeves to catch a wave so that he can in turn catch criminal Swayze, a daring bank robber who is also an ethereal and brilliant surfer.

Playing a surfer for any actor isn't easy, but for Petty, the farm girl from Iowa, it was doubly hard because she had never even seen the ocean prior to making this film. So how was she able to be convincing as a surfer girl? "It's a valid lifestyle, and so I had to go in with the attitude: 'like and accept this', and then let it take over me. I was still scared to death during 90% of it, but I learnt to surf very well."

Her attitude towards the ocean has changed considerably since working on the film. "I have a new relationship with it, that's for sure. You have to just respect it and let it do with you what it will, because you can't fight or ignore it. I took some major spills when we were making the movie and got 10 stitches in my foot. We were out surfing at Pipeline in Hawaii and that was pretty scary, but I also got a lot of pleasure out of it."

Apart from Tyler's surfing attributes, Petty feels fairly close to her *Point Break* character. "I relate to her fairly well, in that she's an independent girl living on her own. We never got to see where she lived, but I assume she lived by herself, paid her own bills and spent all her waking moments in the water. That's a really lovely way to live unless you're a capitalistic, materialistic, crazy Republican," which Petty definitely is not.

Despite the commercial success of *Point Break*, Lori continues on the tough audition trail. It paid off when she won a key role in Penny Marshall's new film, *A League Of Their Own*. Set in the 1940s, the film is a comedy about an all-female baseball team. "I play a girl called Kit, the youngest sister of Geena Davis and we live on a farm. In 1943-44, when all the men are at war, professional women's baseball is invented. Kit's always been second best, and ends up playing when her sister signs up. It's a nice relationship story with the two girls."

Petty wants to continue specialising in film acting, as opposed to the stage, "because film is such an escapist pleasure for the audience, where they actually leave their homes and go to a dark, huge theatre, packed with strangers and all sit together and have this experience alone." She admits that what she enjoys the most about working in the movies is "what happens between action and cut. When you're living in that other world and it's pretty amazing and wonderful, you can go to bed and feel great."

BEAM US UP, SCOTTIE

Continued from page 8

P.F: You've worked with four directors on the film series. Can you tell me what differences you noticed in the approaches of Robert Wise, Nicholas Meyer, Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner?

J.D: I don't think that either Robert Wise or Gene Roddenberry got a proper opportunity to direct and produce, because Paramount kept on interfering all the time. I know Wise would have liked to have had another three months to edit. If you want my opinion, our best director, others notwithstanding, has been Leonard Nimoy. He really knew what he was doing and he did his homework. There was no messing about. Nicholas Meyer has the ability, being a fabulous writer, to change something instantly. He's a pretty smart guy and he knows our characters. As far as Shatner is concerned, I'd rather not talk about that.

P.F: I take it you weren't fond of *Star Trek V*?

J.D: I thought it was a piece of trash. Even our *Star Trek* fans did not go out and talk about it. It got took \$52 million and dropped dead.

P.F: Yet it seems curious that despite that film's relative

failure, Paramount decided to go ahead with a sixth movie?

J.D: I think the idea of a 25th anniversary had an awful lot to do with going into *Star Trek VI*.

P.F: How would you distinguish the sixth film from its predecessors?

J.D: It's still *Star Trek* but it's different. To me, *The Wrath of Khan* was a fabulous film, as was *Star Trek IV*; to distinguish the latest one would mean telling you the plot. I think the sixth one has taken the most fruitful elements of the two most successful films - the action/adventure of the second film, the social relevance/comedy of the fourth - complete with the most fantastic suspense.

P.F: This is definitely the last one, isn't it?

J.D: Use your commonsense now. If this one makes \$120 million, do you think Paramount is going to let it go? Why would they do that? Fans don't care how old we are; they just want to see us together. They don't want to see us separate.

P.F: Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions at this stage of your career?

J.D: I'd like to do some stage work and one of these days I'll get up and do it. I have a play that I'm interested in doing, but I keep telling the author that I'm not old enough.